
ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



29 Hazen Drive, Concord, New Hampshire 03301 • (603) 271-3503 • www.des.nh.gov

SSB-9

2008

Repair/Replacement of Existing Residential ISDS Without Obtaining Prior DES Approval

Often, homeowners and permitted septic system installers and designers ask the Department of Environmental Services if an existing failed septic system can be replaced without obtaining an “Approval for Construction” or an “Approval for Operation” from DES. The answer is yes, provided that the following conditions from administrative rule Env-Wq 1003.10 are met.

A septic tank may be replaced with one or more tanks of the same or larger size, without DES approval. This replacement of *tanks* only (not leachfields), applies to commercial and non-commercial systems.

To see if your system qualifies for repair/replacement, please answer the following questions.

1. Does the ISDS serve a commercial building?

YES ☐ NO ☐

A commercial building is anything other than a one or two family private residence. If you answer yes to this question, you need to obtain a construction approval to replace the system.

2. Is the leaching portion of the septic system within 75 feet of any surface water or water supply well?

YES ☐ NO ☐

Surface water is a lake, pond, stream, river, tidal water, marsh or other body of water, natural or artificial. If you answer yes to this question, you must obtain a construction approval in order to replace the system.

3. Is the leaching portion of the septic system less than 24 inches above the seasonal high water table?

YES ☐ NO ☐

This will have to be determined by a permitted designer or homeowner reading a test pit dug next to the existing septic system. Again if the answer is yes, a construction approval is needed.

4. Any change to dimensions, location, depth, or type of design?

If you answer yes to this question, a construction approval is needed prior to any work on the system.

YES ☐ NO ☐

5. Any change of use?

If you answer yes to this question, a construction approval is needed prior to any work on the system.

YES ☐ NO ☐

6. Any increase in flow?

If you answer yes to this question, a construction approval is needed prior to any work on the system.

YES ☐ NO ☐

Remember, if you've answered YES to any of the above questions, your septic system does NOT qualify for Repair/Replacement of Existing systems under Env-Wq 1003.10.

Please note, only New Hampshire permitted installers and designers or a homeowner for his/her domicile, can do repair work on existing septic systems. Additionally, it is necessary to submit a Repair/Replacement Questionnaire to DES and receive written approval from DES prior to undertaking or starting work. A second form must be submitted within 10 days of completing work. Copies of these forms can be obtained in the appendix of the Env-Wq 1000 rules or by calling (603) 271-3711.

This fact sheet is intended as a general summary of regulations concerning the replacement of a subsurface disposal system; it is not intended to replace the Administrative Rules contained in Env-Wq Chapter 1000. It is also important to remember that some municipalities may have additional requirements. Therefore, you should check with your local officials before beginning any project.

For More Information

For more information concerning subsurface disposal systems contact:
NH Department of Environmental Services Subsurface Systems Bureau
29 Hazen Drive; PO Box 95
(603) 271-3711
Fax: (603) 271-6683